(iv) Discussion papers for enhancement of level of economic engagement with Bangladesh, Pakistan, BIMSTEC and ASEAN would be prepared.

Foreign trade under FTAs

†250. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that foreign trade with serveral other countries of the world is done on the basis of Free Trade Agreements;

(b) if so, the names of the countries with which foreign trade of India is going on till date under Free Trade Agreements; and

(c) the value of export and import in terms of money during the year 2004-05 and during first three months of 2005-06 separately with each country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) India had entered into a free Trade Agreement only with Sri Lanka *w.e.f.* 28th December, 1998.

(c) In respect of trade with Sri Lanka for the year 2004-05, the total export from India to Sri Lanka was amounting to Rs. 6082.60 crore, whereas import from Sri Lanka during this period was to the tune of Rs. 1636.65 crore. Provisional trade data for April and May, 2005 stood at exports worth Rs. 979.05 crore to Sri Lanka and imports worth Rs. 335.20 crore from Sri Lanka (Source Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCI&S) Kolkata).

Joint Business Council between India and Pakistan

251. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is true that Pakistan endorsd India's proposal for setting up of a Joint Business Council for greater economic cooperation between the two countries;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether the issue of granting MFN status to India has come up when the Pakistan Commerce Minister came to India recently; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for not granting MFN status to India by Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir. During the visit of President Musharraf to India (April, 2005), India and Pakistan agreed that the Joint Business Council should meet soon.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The issue of Most Favoured Nation Status to India was discussed during the meeting of Commerce Ministers of India and Pakistan with apex chambers, namely, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and Punjab, Haryana, Delhi Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI), on the sidelines of the G-20 Meeting held in New Delhi in March, 2005.

Pakistan has so far not granted MFN status to India despite its obligations, including under the WTO, and has cited extraneous political, economic and other reasons for this.

Fall in coffee price

252. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that coffee prices in the international market have fallen drastically thereby creating a lot of problems for coffee growers;

(b) if so, the special package announced by the Central Government for coffee growers;

(c) whether the coffee growers have alleged that correct information of the scheme has not been communicated to them by the concerned authorities;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the corrective measures taken to help the coffee growers in this regard?